

# Are you pregnant or a new parent?



Learn about your rights  
in the workplace.

# Congratulations!

In Minnesota, soon-to-be, new and nursing parents have legal protections to help keep them safe and healthy in the workplace.

That means it's your right to work safely during pregnancy and to express breast milk when you return to work.

Know your rights. Speak up. Most employers are willing to comply with laws that support their pregnant and nursing employees. If they are unwilling, we can help you.



State laws to support working parents and employers cover three categories:

### **1. Pregnancy at work**

### **2. Pregnancy or parental leave from work**

### **3. Expressing milk at work**



# 1. Pregnancy at work

Staying healthy at work is important when you're pregnant, both for you and your baby. It's your right to request, and your employer must provide:

- ◆ more frequent restroom, food and water breaks;
- ◆ seating; and
- ◆ limits on lifting more than 20 pounds.

You have the right to request other workplace changes when you have been given advice from a health care provider or doula. This may require you to have a conversation with your employer about your request.

Other changes may include temporary transfer to a less strenuous or hazardous job.

There may be limited exceptions to these employer requirements.

## **Good to know:**

**Your employer cannot require you to adjust your working conditions because you're pregnant.**

## 2. Pregnancy or parental leave from work

By law, you may take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave during or following pregnancy when:

- ◆ you work for a company with 21 or more employees at one site;
- ◆ you have worked at least half time during the past 12 months; and
- ◆ you have been with the company for a total of at least 12 months.

Pregnancy and parental leave may be taken for:

- ◆ prenatal care;
- ◆ pregnancy or related health conditions;
- ◆ childbirth or adoption; or
- ◆ bonding time by a birthing or non-birthing parent after the birth or adoption of the child.

Many of these leave provisions overlap with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

### **Good to know:**

**You may be able to use employer-provided benefits, such as sick leave or disability leave, if you are sick during pregnancy or to recover after childbirth.**

### 3. Expressing milk at work

Breastfeeding improves well-being and reduces health care costs. If you decide to express breast milk at work, your employer must provide:

- ◆ break time to express breast milk; and
- ◆ a private area to express milk that:
  - is not a bathroom;
  - is shielded from view;
  - is in close proximity to the work area;
  - is free of intrusion from coworkers and the public; and
  - has access to an electrical outlet.

There may be limited exceptions to these employer requirements.

#### **Good to know:**

**The size of your workplace doesn't matter. Even if you are the only employee, your employer is required to comply with the nursing mothers law.**

# How to start the conversation

Ready to share the news with your employer?  
Follow these tips.

**Don't wait.** Begin the conversation early to help yourself and your employer.

**Be positive.** Approach the news as a win-win for both you and your employer.

**Speak up.** It's OK to tell your employer your needs and rights.

**Be informed.** Share this brochure with your employer, human resources manager or workplace advocates.

**Know your rights.** An employer may not retaliate against an employee for asserting their legal rights.

## Good to know:

**Discrimination because of pregnancy is prohibited under the Minnesota Human Rights Act regardless of the employer's size.**

# Where to go for more support

## Contact us:

- ◆ if you have questions or need more information;
- ◆ if your employer is unwilling to comply with the law.

We're here to help you — and to protect your rights!



## Labor Standards

443 Lafayette Road N.

St. Paul, MN 55155

651-284-5075

800-342-5354

651-284-5099 (Spanish)

[www.dli.mn.gov/newparents](http://www.dli.mn.gov/newparents)

[dli.laborstandards@state.mn.us](mailto:dli.laborstandards@state.mn.us)